

World Language Capacity in Kentucky Schools

GOAL: By 2016 all Kentucky students demonstrate competency in a world language at the “Basic User” * level.

The above goal is designed to promote World Language proficiency as a key to success for students in the 21st century. In order to meet this goal it is first necessary to build capacity in the state in terms of (a) teacher recruitment, (b) teacher certification, (c) quality instruction, and (d) other resources and opportunities. The following action plan (also attached in a chart form) suggests addressing those areas in ways that emphasize:

- implementing an early start, extended sequence approach to attaining proficiency;
- moving to proficiency-orientation rather than credit accumulation as the mark of successful language learning; and
- working with higher education and the Education Professional Standards Board to achieve our goals.

Need for Teachers

One main barrier to implementing a statewide world language requirement is the shortage of qualified teachers. With the growing awareness of the importance of early language learning, elementary language teachers will be needed. This is an area where there are the fewest certified teachers. The number of Spanish teachers is increasing, but there are still 40-50 positions each year that are filled with emergency certified personnel or visiting teachers from Spain. Even though the need for French, German and Latin teachers is decreasing, a future need is predicted because emergency-certified teachers in those fields are still being hired and fewer college students are choosing to become teachers of French, German and Latin. There is also a growing demand for less commonly taught languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Arabic, but, at present, Kentucky colleges do not certify teachers in these languages. For this reason, the following actions regarding recruitment and certification are suggested in the plan to build teacher capacity.

Teacher Recruitment

In order to enhance teacher recruitment:

- KDE should strongly urge districts to make use of the Visiting Teachers Programs that supply teachers from countries with whom KDE has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Spain, China, and France, as well as from Germany and Japan.
- As the number of visiting teachers increases, KDE should investigate the feasibility of using the private agency, Visiting International Faculty (a resource used by North Carolina), to manage the visiting teachers program.
- KDE should promote the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority's (KHEAA) loan forgiveness program for students preparing to become World Language teachers.
- KDE should place a stronger emphasis on recruiting from among the Kentucky students who participate in the English Assistants program, which allows them to teach in French schools for a year.
- KDE should work with high schools to enhance the Future Educators of America program through a focus on World Languages.
- KDE should work with districts to develop regional banks of community native-speakers who could be recruited as para-educators and teachers.
- KDE should hold job fairs to recruit World Language teachers.

Teacher Certification

Teacher certification issues can be addressed by utilizing alternative routes to certification, such as the Education Professional Standards Board's Option 7, which is a four-course, six-week program that certifies candidates who already have college degrees and language proficiency. Students would be recruited for this program from among emergency certified teachers, para-educators, foreign students in KY universities not currently in teacher education programs, and local foreign native speakers. It would be helpful to urge the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) to prioritize this program for their Improving Educator Quality grants in order to offer free tuition for the candidates. KDE and CPE should urge universities to offer such

programs and to promote student-teaching programs abroad, new certification programs in less commonly taught languages and, particularly, the requirement of a world language endorsement (proficiency at the Intermediate-Mid level) for all certification areas. Requiring all teachers to demonstrate such proficiency will build the potential pool of teachers, as well as better prepare teachers academically and socio-culturally to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) demands of teaching Limited English Proficient students in all content areas.

Building Quality World Language Instruction

The current seat-time versus performance approach to teaching and learning has not served to produce students with high enough levels of language proficiency. In order to get those students to a Novice-High level of competency, it is suggested that KDE strongly promote early language learning with extended sequences and provide the tools necessary for success. These tools include identification of model programs and curricula, professional development for elementary school para-educators and teachers with enough language proficiency to facilitate programs that may or may not be supplemented with video programs. Also, KDE should provide career-based units of study and Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS) model World Language modules that demonstrate effective instruction and unit/lesson design. KDE should also promote use of the LinguaFolio, a self-assessment and reflective learning tool designed to make language learning more transparent to the learner.

Other Capacity-Building Resources and Opportunities

Other areas that would build capacity for language learning include KDE's promotion of travel and study abroad programs for students, teachers and administrators and other mechanisms, such as KVHS and KET language courses, performance-based credit, online proficiency assessment and cooperative programs with schools in our MOU countries (currently Spain, China, France, Germany and Japan). KDE should also support the development of a Governor's Scholars Program that focuses on International Education, additional KVHS Chinese language courses, and university-based summer language immersion camps.

***Basic User** is a term from the Common Scale of Reference used to describe what learners can do with language.

A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
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